

Chiara Ferella

## ‘A Path for Understanding’: Journey Metaphors in (Three) Early Greek Philosophers

### Summary

This paper analyzes the use of journey metaphors by three early Greek philosophers, Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Empedocles. My investigation emphasizes the powerful, malleable and polyvalent nature of this metaphor cluster both with reference to diverse authors and in the same text. It highlights, moreover, the relationship between metaphor, imagination and philosophical argumentation, above all when a fresh metaphorical stratum is introduced within an already established metaphor. Finally, it investigates to what extent the introduction of a fresh metaphorical stratum contributes to creative thinking and, by structuring and organizing new insights, to theoretical argumentation.

**Keywords:** Heraclitus; Parmenides; Empedocles; metaphor; journey; path; theoretical argumentation

Dieser Aufsatz untersucht die Verwendung von Reise-Metaphern von drei frühgriechischen Denkern: Heraklit, Parmenides und Empedokles. Meine Untersuchung hebt die ausdrucksstarke, leichtplastische und polyvalente Natur dieses Metaphern-Bereiches sowohl in Bezug auf diversen Autoren, als auch in ein und demselben Text hervor. Im Fokus steht der Zusammenhang zwischen Metapher, Imagination und philosophischer Argumentation, besonders wenn ein neuer metaphorischer Stratus in einen schon etablierten Metapher-Bereich eingeführt wird. Schließlich wird auch untersucht, in wie fern ein neuer metaphorischer Stratus, indem dieser neue Kenntnisse und Einsichten strukturiert und organisiert, zum kreativen Denken und zur theoretischen Argumentation beiträgt.

**Keywords:** Heraklit; Parmenides; Empedokles; Metapher; Reise; Weg; theoretische Argumentation

## I Introduction

By paraphrasing the outset of a book by Z. Kövecses,<sup>1</sup> consider the use in English of the following phrases: *following* a story or feeling *lost* when not *following* it; *going over* a talk; *reaching* a good point; *going around* in circles when arguing ineffectually; *coming* to a conclusion; *following a path* of thoughts; and so on. These phrases would not count in English as using particularly poetic or picturesque language. Yet the expressions in italics are all metaphors related to the domain of journey. We can see that a large part of the way we speak about aspects of knowledge in English derives from the way we speak about journeys. In fact, it seems that speakers of English make extensive use of the concrete and familiar domain of journey when they talk about the highly abstract and elusive concept of knowledge.

Ancient Greek authors analogously spoke about aspects of knowledge by employing journey metaphors. In fact, a traditional, ancient image depicts poetry as a chariot and the poet as a traveler who, following the paths of songs, composes. More generally, ancient Greek terminology depicts the act of composing a song or of storytelling in terms of following paths, the results of this composing in terms of destinations, and the poets or authors who are composing in terms of travelers who, during this journey, acquire and at the same time give form to their knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper, I analyze the use of journey metaphors by three early Greek philosophers, Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Empedocles, thereby attempting to indicate the purposes behind their metaphor use. One main question that my analysis aims to raise concerns the powerful, malleable, and polyvalent nature of a metaphor cluster both with reference to diverse authors and in the same text. Another question concerns the relationship between metaphor, imagination, and philosophical argumentation, above all when a fresh metaphorical stratum is introduced within an already established metaphor. More specifically, to what extent does a fresh metaphorical stratum contribute to original and creative developments in theoretical argumentation?

I will show to what extent, despite drawing from the same metaphor cluster, Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Empedocles make use of the conceptual domain of journey

1 Kövecses 2002, 3.

2 See Ferella 2017, 112–114 and the contribution of Hose in this volume. Becker 1937, 100–116, by analysing the development of the traditional motive of ways of songs or ways of stories in Pindar, Herodotus, and the tragic poets Aeschylus and Sophocles, already concluded that journey metaphors developed from spoken language and became, in Homer, a conventionalized way of referring to poetical composition, storytelling, or, more

simply, to talking/writing about something in general. Journey metaphors depicting diverse aspects of knowledge (which either have to be acquired or, once acquired, must be expressed in words) are especially conventional in prose, for instance in Herodotus (where we frequently find expressions such as ἐρχομαι φράσων, λέξων, ἐρέων; ἥια λέξων or ἀνεμι, ἀναβαίνω, ἐπάνεμι, ἐπὶ τὸν πρότερον λόγον, etc.

in very different ways. However, in all cases, the evaluation of metaphor use is closely dependent upon the context in which journey metaphors are employed. This may raise problems with reference to fragmentary traditions, in which quotations of authors' own words are often given without context. In the present study, this particularly affects our interpretation of Heraclitus' metaphors, which will be analyzed and evaluated by taking into account all possible contextual scenarios. As a consequence, Heraclitus' use of journey metaphors may be either entrenched or highly lively and intentional, depending on which context we account for. On the other hand, both Parmenides' and Empedocles' use of journey metaphors can be considered as unconventional and deliberate; yet they show diverse communicative purposes. Specifically, Parmenides' metaphor use has a strongly paraenetic scope: he uses journey metaphors to dramatize the choice towards his philosophy, depicted as the only path that leads to 'rescuing' truth, in contrast to the path of 'ordinary' people who, because they know nothing, are merely wandering around. Empedocles, on the other hand, not only uses traditional journey metaphors, but also introduces a fresh metaphorical stratum within the established metaphor cluster for argumentative and theoretical purposes: journey metaphors structure and organize his theory of sensation and knowledge acquisition.

## 2 Heraclitus

Heraclitus' fragment DK 22 B 45 is constructed around journey metaphors:

ψυχῆς πείρατα ἰὼν οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροι ὁ πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν· οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει.

The one who travels over every road will not find out, by going, the limits of the soul. So deep a *logos* does it/he have.<sup>3</sup>

3 The fragment is quoted by Diog. Laert. 9.7 as part of a brief and general introduction to the doctrines of Heraclitus. The text of the fragment, in the version reported above, follows the new edition of Laks and Most 2016, vol. 3, 188. See also Mouraviev 2006, III.b/1, 115. However, its translation and interpretation mainly follow Betegh 2009, 398–404. Nevertheless, I am not entirely convinced by Betegh's proposal to exclude ἰὼν from the text (following Tiziano Dorandi, the most recent editor of Diogenes Laertius). The wording πείρατα ἰὼν is the result of an emendation by Diels of the text transmitted by the manuscripts. Specifically, the most important manuscripts, B and P, present πειρατέον (but in

B ἐ is erased), whereas other manuscripts have πειράται ὄν. The correction πείρατα (scil. ψυχῆς) is a good solution on the basis of the Latin translation of the Heraclitean fragment by Tertullian (*terminos animae*). The participle ἰὼν, in this position, is instead more problematic (see von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1927, 276: "so gestellt ist ἰὼν undenkbar"). According to Betegh, since "the participle is not attested in the manuscripts, it does not have the support of Tertullian, and does not seem to add much to the meaning, and its syntactical position may be problematic", the better option is to expunge it from the text. To this I would object that:

Explicit references to the domain of journey are represented by terms such as ἰών, ὁ ... ἐπιπορευόμενος and ὁδόν. That they are metaphoric instantiations is suggested by the fact that they are used to conceptualize the abstract notions of soul and *logos*.<sup>4</sup> Terms such as πείρατα and ἄν' ἐξεύροι could also be seen as metaphoric instantiations from the same domain. However, we cannot elucidate Heraclitus' metaphors in all their nuances without first having a general interpretation of the fragment. This is particularly complicated by the fact that the fragment has been transmitted without contextual information and, for this reason, it offers more than one univocal interpretation.

As G. Betegh has shown,<sup>5</sup> the Heraclitean sentence is composed of four syntactic/semantic units: (a) the soul's limits, which (b) will not be found out; (c) the traveler; and finally (d) the depth of the *logos* that the soul or, according to Betegh's interpretation, the traveler has. A first problem is to identify which soul Heraclitus is talking about. Two interpretations have been offered, according to which the soul is either (1) the divine cosmic soul,<sup>6</sup> or (2) the individual soul.<sup>7</sup> According to the second reading, moreover, the individual soul could be further specified as (2a) the specific soul of each (human) individual; or (2b) the particular individual soul of the traveler.<sup>8</sup>

According to (1), the limits of the soul, indicating the internal extremities of the space of the soul, characterize the soul as something that has spatial extension, presenting it in the same way as one of the cosmic masses. In fact, the expression ψυχῆς πείρατα recalls the Homeric formulas such as πείρατα γαίης (e.g. *Il.* 8.478–479; *Od.* 4.563; Hes. *Erga* 168), πείρατα Ὠκεανοῖο (e.g. *Od.* 11.12), or πείρατα πόντοιο (e.g. *Il.* 8.478–479). The Homeric parallels could reinforce the idea of the soul as a cosmic mass like the masses of earth and ocean.<sup>9</sup> In this reading ψυχή coincides with the world soul. Consequently, the limits of the world soul are to be taken as concrete points in space, probably

(1) the epic poetry offers examples of the interjected participle ἰών, for instance at *Il.* 1.138 (referred by Betegh 2009, 397); and above all (2) Pindar *Pyth.* 10. 29–30, namely the text that animates Diels' emendation, constitutes a relatively strong parallel and helps explain the corruption in the transmitted text at the lowest cost.

- 4 The definition of the Heraclitean notion of *logos* is a notorious problem, which in a footnote I can only try to explain in very general terms. Evidence from ancient texts indicates that, at the beginning of the fifth century BCE, the term *logos* described an oral or written report usually presented to persuade, please, or teach the public. Yet some pivotal Heraclitean fragments, especially B 1, 2, and 50, suggest that the term can also indicate something that exists independently from the 'reporter'. This challenges the traditional meaning of the word. For a detailed

yet schematic survey of the term *logos* in sixth and fifth-century Greek literature, see Guthrie 1965, I, 420–424. More recently, Gianvittorio 2010 advocates the opinion that Heraclitus' *logos* must be translated as 'discourse' or 'report' in all its occurrences. The interpretation of the concept of *logos* touches on an aspect of Heraclitus' thought that, despite its pivotal nature for the understanding of his philosophy in general, is rather marginal to the comprehension of his metaphor use. For this reason, in the present study, I will leave the term untranslated.

- 5 Betegh 2009, 405.

- 6 Kahn 1979; Bollack and Wissmann 1972, 163–164.

- 7 Marcovich 1967, 367; Dilcher 1995; Pradeau 2002.

- 8 Betegh 2009, 412.

- 9 See Betegh 2009, 406. For a parallel, cf. B 36, which treats the soul on a par with the cosmic masses water and earth.

along the vertical direction.<sup>10</sup> According to Heraclitus, no matter how many roads (concrete) travellers travel, they won't be able to discover the (concrete) limits or borders of the world soul, since its *logos* is incredibly deep.

According to this reading, we can consider Heraclitus' use of journey metaphors as 'undeliberate'.<sup>11</sup> Spatial metaphors are, in fact, employed to conceptualize an abstract notion, that of the world soul, in terms of a spatially extended mass, similar to the extension of the ocean, the terrestrial crust, and the size of the sky. We could hardly conceptualize and speak about the highly abstract concept of the (world) soul without the use of metaphors.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, as the concept of soul has to be specified in terms of a spatially extended cosmic mass, the metaphors to be used are most likely spatial metaphors like those employed by Heraclitus.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, Heraclitus' metaphor use in this case would be undeliberate, as there is no sign of an intentional use of spatial metaphors *as metaphors*, and, consequently, it does not display any particular communicative purpose. Simply, Heraclitus is using metaphors because they are essential tools in order to conceptualize and speak of the abstract concepts of the world soul.

According to (2), on the other hand, the sense of the first part of Heraclitus' sentence will be, in very general terms, that much traveling on the part of the subject does not help discover the nature of the human soul. According to this reading, the reference to the limits of the soul needs to be explored further. In fact, if we are not referring to a spatially extended cosmic soul, what does it mean to say that the human soul has limits? R. B. Onians believes that *πείρατα* here means 'bonds' (rope-ends), implying both 'beginning' and 'end'. Taken in this way, the expression 'bonds of the soul' may not indicate an actual place in the body where the soul has its end and beginning,<sup>14</sup> but a metaphorical place. Accordingly, the end and beginning of the soul could indicate its origin and conclusion, hence the whole parabola of its existence; that is, its fate in this life and, possibly, beyond. In this framework, another Homeric parallel indicates that the word *πείρατα* can signify the end of a certain situation or state of things, signaling the completion or final destination of a process. The word 'limits', accordingly, indicates

10 Betegh 2009, 407.

11 On deliberate metaphor use and its communicative function see Steen 2008 and, more recently, Steen 2017.

12 See the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (or CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson 1980. In their view, metaphor is not simply a device of creative literary imagination; rather, it is a valuable cognitive tool without which neither poets nor 'ordinary' people could conceptualize and express abstract concepts such as time, love, life, death, etc., as well as, in this case, the cosmic soul.

13 Similar observations can be made with reference to the highly abstract concept of time, see Kövecses 2002, 23: "time is a notoriously difficult concept to understand. The major metaphor for the comprehension of time is one according to which time is an object that moves. Many common everyday expressions demonstrate this: 'the time will *come* when ...'; 'Christmas is *coming up* soon'; 'time *flies*'; 'in the *following* week ...'; 'time *goes by* quickly'" (author's italics).

14 This is the interpretation by Marcovich 1967, 367.

the idea of end, completion, or even achievement.<sup>15</sup> Thus, no one could find out the completion of the human soul, its origin and end – hence, its real nature – by traveling over every road. The verb ἐξευρίσκω, expressing the idea of discovering, occurs in other Heraclitean fragments. In B 94, discovery is the result of attentive observation, better still, of control: the Furies, ministers of Justice, “will find it out” if the sun oversteps his measures. Additionally, B 18 claims that “he who does not expect the unexpected will not discover it.” It is worth noting that in B 27, “the unexpected” is the fate of men after death.<sup>16</sup> This parallel, together with the word πείρατα in the sense I indicated above, suggests that the one who travels over every road cannot discern the fate of the human soul. Furthermore, a comparable form of the verb ἐξευρίσκω occurs in B 22:

χρυσὸν γὰρ οἱ διζήμενοι γῆν πολλὴν ὀρύσσουσι καὶ εὗρισκουσιν ὀλίγον.

Seekers of gold dig up much earth and find little.

The fragment refers to the seeking of something that is highly precious, in this case gold, which lies deep inside the earth’s surface and which can only be found, therefore, through hard effort. In fact, the discovery of a small amount of gold requires that the seeker digs up much earth. The parallel between εὗρίσκω in B 22 and ἐξευρίσκω in B 45 suggests the idea that looking for the fate of the soul, for its beginning and end, is like seeking for gold. Accordingly, in order to find out the limits of the soul, one has to go deep down below the surface of things, searching inside oneself,<sup>17</sup> looking for hidden meanings while digging up many irrelevant elements, because the *logos* lies, like gold, at a great depth.

Thus, following reading (2), we understand the fragment as Heraclitus denying that *traveling over every road* could lead to discovering the nature and fate of the soul. This has mainly been explained in two different ways: either (I) Heraclitus is pointing out an unsuccessful method of research coinciding with traveling over many places. In this case, the ‘limits’ of the soul may potentially be found out if one pursues the right research, which does not include much traveling; or (II) Heraclitus is paradoxically indicating that “only the one who travels every road will not find out the limits of the soul.”<sup>18</sup> In this case the pivotal content of the fragment is that the soul is limitless. Therefore, searching everywhere for the limits of the soul will result in the fundamental awareness that what we are looking for cannot be discovered; for the soul is limitless and this is the truth that only the one who travels every road can find. Reading (II), advocated by Betegh, requires that, in the last phrase of Heraclitus’ fragment, οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει, the deep *logos* is not that of the human soul in general, but that of the particular soul of the traveler: “so

15 Cf. e.g. *Od.* 23.248.

16 Cf. Kahn 1979, 129.

17 Cf. DK 22 B 101: ἐδιζήσαμην ἐμεωυτόν.

18 See Betegh 2009, 412.

deep a *logos* does he [i.e. the traveler] have”. According to this reading, traveling is taken as a “precondition of having [a soul that has] a deep *logos*”. Betegh’s argument works as follows: in as much as you travel over every road, your *logos* increases and gradually becomes deeper and deeper. That your *logos* increases means that the *logos of your soul* becomes deeper and deeper; yet, as much as your soul has a deep *logos*, its limits cannot be found out. “This is why one will never find the limits of the soul – only such a person will be aware of the limitlessness of the soul,” Betegh concludes.<sup>19</sup>

However, there is at least another possible reading for Heraclitus’ fragment. One can interpret it in reference to the individual traveler and still make a point in favor of reading (I), which seems to be more in line with other Heraclitean fragments. This interpretation takes the sentence οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει, “so deep a *logos* does he [i.e. the traveler] have”, as ironic: the one who travels over every road in order to inquire into the nature and fate of his soul displays *de facto* a superficial *logos*. In fact, it is not unlikely that we see in this fragment a hint at a method of research that Heraclitus seems to have disliked elsewhere: that kind of inquiry that Heraclitus attributed, for instance, to Hecataeus and Xenophanes (cf. B 40), and which was also pursued by Herodotus. This approach to knowledge consists in traveling all around the known world in order to collect as much information as possible. Yet, this accumulation of factual data is, for Heraclitus, a form of *polymathie*, “much learning” that “does not teach understanding” (B 40). In particular, this way of inquiry is not appropriate to specific kinds of topics, like the *logos* or the nature and fate of the soul. In those cases, Heraclitus seems to recommend introspection or, at least, an in-depth analysis of the object of research.

Note that it is according to this last reading that Heraclitus’ metaphor use displays all its communicative power. Through the images of travelers and the many roads over which they travel, Heraclitus may at first have referred, in a less figurative way, to journeys of knowledge or journeys of discovery – a common practice of early thinkers at Heraclitus’ time. Nevertheless, the notion of journeys of discovery hinted at by Heraclitus can be taken as a metaphor indicating a precise method of research, which, if you are seeking into the limits of the soul, brings about no relevant results. For the soul can be penetrated and discovered only through an in-depth analysis that looks for deep, significant truth. In this reading, Heraclitus employs journey metaphors to depict the one who wishes to know in terms of a traveler, while the ‘roads’ traveled could depict the different methods of inquiry one pursues. Accordingly, knowledge acquired at the end of the learning process is depicted as the destination of a journey or, more precisely, as a discovery resulting from research journeys. Note that, as we have seen above, this idea of a completion achieved at the end of a process is within the Greek concept of *πείρατα* (this also being taken metaphorically). *Ψυχῆς πείρατα*, therefore, turn out to

19 Betegh 2009, 412.

be the fragment's most important words; indeed, the core of the message, outlined by their very first position in the sentence.

### 3 Parmenides

Parmenides<sup>20</sup> of Elea analogously used journey metaphors in his philosophy to talk about topics and methods of inquiry in terms of roads, to refer to those who wish to know as travelers, and to hint at the results of inquiry in terms of destinations. Much more than in Heraclitus, however, in Parmenides journey metaphors and, in particular, the figurative motif connected to *path* constitute the central and unifying motif of his philosophical poem as a whole.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Parmenides' concepts concerning path, journey, and destination are part of a whole metaphorical scenario: Parmenides (and, in his example, anyone who wishes to know) is a traveler on a journey with his inquiry-goals seen as destinations to be reached. His philosophy could be seen as the vehicle that enables people to pursue those goals. The journey is not easy. First of all, there are different paths one can choose. These paths represent different *ways* of inquiry; hence, different methods of inquiry and diverse arguments resulting from them. There are crossroads where a decision must have been made about which roads and directions one must follow.

To appreciate the centrality of journey metaphors in Parmenides' philosophy, let us consider Parmenides' own words in DK 28 B 2 more closely:

εἰ δ' ἄγ' ἐγὼν ἐρέω, κόμισαι δὲ σὺ μῦθον ἀκούσας,  
αἵπερ ὁδοὶ μοῦναι διζήσιός εἰσι νοῆσαι·  
ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὥς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι,  
πειθοῦς ἐστι κέλευθος, ἀληθείη γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ,  
ἡ δ' ὥς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὥς χρεὼν ἐστι μὴ εἶναι,  
τὴν δὴ τοι φράζω παναπευθέα ἔμμεν ἀταρπόν·  
οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἔόν οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν  
οὔτε φράσσεις.

Come now, I shall tell – and convey home the tale once you have heard –  
just which ways of enquiry alone there are for understanding:  
the one, that (it) is and that (it) is not not to be,

20 The present analysis of Parmenides' journey metaphors is an abridged version of my previous contribution on the cognitive aspect of Parmenides' two ways of inquiry: see Ferella 2017, to which I also

refer for a more extensive analysis of the fragments quoted in this chapter.

21 Cf. Reale and Ruggiu 2003, 28, 177–182.



is the path of conviction, for it goes with true reality,  
 but the other, that (it) is not and that (it) must not be  
 this, I tell you, is a trail wholly without report  
 for neither could you apprehend what is not, for it is not to be accomplished,  
 nor could you indicate it.<sup>22</sup>

In the verses above, words relating to the same metaphor cluster are repeated four times within eight lines: we have *ways*, ὁδοί, at l.2, *path*, κέλευθος, and *goes with*, ὀπηδεῖ, at l.4, as well as *trail*, ἀταρπὸν, at l.6. As we can see, not only does Parmenides compare methods of inquiry to paths, but conviction about certain topics and ways of arguing about them is said to *go together* with true arguments, suggesting that developing convincing and true arguments might be understood as following paths. Elsewhere<sup>23</sup> I already demonstrated that this clustering of metaphors from the same domain is to be taken as a device activating metaphoricity. This means that Parmenides is here intentionally drawing attention to the journey metaphors for specific communicative purposes.<sup>24</sup>

The suggestion that we deal here with textual devices drawing attention to the metaphorical domain of journey gains force if we consider the fact that, in the original layout of Parmenides' poem, the verses of B 2 were closely followed by the verses of B 6:

χρή τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἐὼν ἔμμεναι· ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι,  
 μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν· τά σ' ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα.  
 πρώτης γάρ σ' ἄφ' ὁδοῦ ταύτης διζήσιος <ἄρξω>,  
 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῆς, ἣν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν  
 πλάζονται, δίκρανοι· ἀμηχανίη γὰρ ἐν αὐτῶν  
 στήθεσιν ἰθύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φορεῦνται  
 κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φύλα,  
 οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι τωὐτὸν νενόμισται  
 κού τωὐτόν· πάντων δὲ παλίντροπός ἐστι κέλευθος.<sup>25</sup>

It is necessary to say and think that what is is; for it is to be,  
 but nothing is not. These things I bid you ponder.  
 For <I shall begin> for you from this first way of inquiry,  
 then yet again from that which mortals who know nothing  
 wander two-headed: for haplessness in their

22 Text and translation according to Palmer 2009, 364 and 365, slightly modified.

23 Ferella 2017.

24 On attention to metaphors as metaphors, communicative purposes, and deliberate metaphor use, see

n. 11 above.

25 The text and translation of this fragment (except minor modifications) follow Palmer 2009, 366 and 367.

breasts directs their wandering mind. They are borne along deaf and blind at once, bedazzled, indiscriminating hordes, who have supposed that it is and is not the same and not the same; but the path of all these turns back on itself.

Here there are seven words relating to the metaphor cluster of journey within nine verses. Besides the familiar mapping between ways or methods of inquiry and paths (see *ὁδοῦ* at l.3 and *κέλευθος* at l.9), Parmenides verbalizes the conceptually related idea according to which the one who wishes to inquire is understood as a traveler. In these verses in particular, the focus is on human beings who, since they know nothing, *βορτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδέν*, at l.5 are said to wander around, *πλάζονται*. Yet it is helplessness that directs, *ιθύνει*, their wandering mind, *πλακτὸν νόον*. Thus, men are borne, *φορεῦνται*, along a path that leads to no destination, as it turns back on itself, *παλίντροπὸς ἐστι κέλευθος*.

Let us, furthermore, extend our analysis to B 7 and B 8.1–2, which might have closely followed B 6 in the original poem:

(7) οὐ γὰρ μήποτε τοῦτο δαμῆι εἶναι μὴ ἐόντα·  
ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆσδ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ διζήσιος εἶργε νόημα  
μηδέ σ' ἔθος πολῦπειρον ὁδὸν κατὰ τήνδε βιάσθω,  
νωμᾶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ ἠχῆσσαν ἀκουήν  
καὶ γλῶσσαν, κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ πολύδηνριν ἔλεγχον  
ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα

(8) μῦθος δ' ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο  
λείπεται ὥς ἔστιν[.]

(7) For this may never be made manageable, that things that are not are.  
But you from this way of enquiry restrain your understanding,  
and do not let habit born of much experience force you along this way,  
to employ aimless sight and echoing hearing  
and tongue. But judge by reason the strife-filled critique  
I have delivered.

(8) And yet a single tale of a way  
remains. ...<sup>26</sup>

The repetition of the same metaphor word in this fragment is noteworthy: the term *ὁδός* (in different cases) is repeated thrice within seven verses. Here, as in all occurrences we

26 Text and translation according to Palmer 2009, 366–369.

have analyzed thus far, the word *ódos* is used metaphorically to indicate methods or topics of inquiry. Yet it is worth noting that the first reference to *ódos* by Parmenides is not in the metaphorical sense of ‘ways of inquiry’ as we find for the first time in B 2.2. Rather, *ódos* is one of the first words of Parmenides’ poem as a whole, and we find it twice within the very first five lines of the prologue to his philosophical poem (B 1.1–5). Here, *ódos* does not indicate a method of inquiry, but a non-metaphorical<sup>27</sup> pathway that Parmenides travels:

ἵπποι ταί με φέρουσιν, ὅσον τ’ ἐπὶ θυμὸς ἰκάνοι,  
πέμπον, ἐπεὶ μ’ ἐς ὁδὸν βῆσαν πολύφημον ἄγουσαι  
δαίμονος, ἣ κατὰ πάντ’ ἄτη† φέρει εἰδότα φῶτα·  
τῇ φερόμην· τῇ γάρ με πολύφραστοι φέρον ἵπποι  
ἄρμα τιταίνουσαι, κοῦραι δ’ ὁδὸν ἡγεμόνευον.

The mares who carry me as far as the soul could reach  
were leading the way, once they stepped guiding me upon the path of many  
songs<sup>28</sup>  
of the divinity, which carries over †all cities† the man who knows.  
On it was I borne, for on it were the headstrong mares carrying me,  
drawing the chariot along, and maidens were leading the way.<sup>29</sup>

27 Parmenides’ account of his extraordinary journey in the opening of his poem is presented as an allegory. Crisp 2005, 117, defines allegory as a “superextended metaphor”, namely a metaphor “extended to the point where all direct target reference is eliminated”. See, moreover, at p. 129: “Allegories can be regarded as superextended metaphors. The result of their ‘superextension,’ however, is to remove all language relating directly to metaphorical target. What remains is language that refers to and describes the metaphorical source, both literally and non-literally”. We can refer to Parmenides’ proemial journey as an allegory in the sense Crisp points out: “Allegory in literary contexts refers to fiction that are given a continuously metaphorical interpretation [...] What all allegories [...] have in common is that they never refer directly to their metaphorical target. Direct reference is only to the metaphorical source constructed as a fictional situation” (Crisp 2005, 115–116). At pp. 127–128, Crisp clarifies this conclusion: “There is no longer any of that mixing or ‘blending’ of source- and target-related language

that is the linguistic basis for conceptual blending [as for instance in an extended metaphor]. The language of allegory simply refers to and describes the metaphorical source. It thus consists of a set of possible references and predications, or, to speak less literally, the source is construed as a possible, fictional, situation.” Accordingly, we can say that Parmenides, in his introductory depiction of his extraordinary journey, employs non-metaphorically-used, but literally-used language. “A distinction between metaphorically-used and literally-used language can only be drawn in relation to a possible situation. Language relating directly to that situation is literal; language relating to it indirectly is not” (Crisp 2005, 128).

28 Palmer translates “far-fabled”, following Diels-Kranz (“vielberühmt”), Guthrie 1965, II, 7 and Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 243, but see Mourelatos 2008, 41 n. 93, and Cerri 1999, 167.

29 Text and translation according to Palmer 2009, 362 and 363, slightly modified.

It is not unlikely that Parmenides' audience, when hearing for the first time of the two metaphorical *paths* of inquiry (B 2.2; see above), were immediately led to link them to the *ódos* of many songs they heard in the prologue (B 1.2–3). This hypothesis gains force if we consider the fact that the lines of B 6 appear to be constructed in parallel with the lines of the prologue. In particular, the description of ordinary people in B 6 plays on the contrast with Parmenides' self-representation in the very beginning of his poem. As we have seen above, in B 6 we are told that mortals know nothing (*βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδέν*, B 6.4), while Parmenides is here depicted as a man who knows (*εἰδότα φῶτα*, B 1.3). Moreover, mortals wander along (*πλάζονται*, B 6.5), and have a wandering understanding (*πλακτὸν νόον*, B 6.6), because they are borne along (*φορεῦνται*, B 6.5). In contrast, mares carry (*φέρουσιν*, B 1.1) Parmenides along a divine path that leads (*φέρει*, B 1.3) to a precise, divine destination that coincides with the source of Parmenides' knowledge and philosophy, as we apprehend a few verses later. In contrast, the path of mortals turns back on itself (*παλίντροπός ἐστι κέλευθος*, B 6.9), and as such, does not lead to any destination or knowledge. Given this, it seems reasonable to conclude that, when hearing of the two ways of inquiry in B 2 and of the depiction of wandering people in B 6, Parmenides' audience has recalled the whole scene of Parmenides' journey depicted in the prologue.

It is worth mentioning that Parmenides' prologue, quoted in its entirety by Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* VII, 111 ff. = DK 28 B 1), is the account of Parmenides' exceptional journey to the house of Night, in order to meet a goddess who is presented as the source of Parmenides' philosophy. In fact, the rest of Parmenides' philosophical discourse coincides with the words the goddess reveals to Parmenides (addressed throughout in the second person singular) on the occasion of their encounter. As M. M. Sassi (1988) has convincingly pointed out, the first words the goddess reveals to Parmenides confront him with a metaphorical crossroads, namely, as we saw above, with the choice between the two paths of inquiry. As Sassi argued, the motif of the crossroads plays an essential role in several accounts of the soul's journeys to the afterlife that we find in the so-called golden tablets<sup>30</sup> and in some of Plato's myths (like the myth of Er in the tenth book of Plato's *Republic*, 614b).<sup>31</sup>

30 The golden tablets are texts found in funerary graves and tumuli of the fifth and fourth century BCE. They consist of brief texts in hexameter, engraved on small pieces of gold, destined to provide post-mortem instructions for the initiates in the underworld. Scholars have suggested that the texts engraved on the tablets come from a more ancient oral tradition that employed, like Parmenides' poem, Homeric material: cf. Edmonds 2004, 32, and Fer-

rari 2007, 120–121. It is worth noting that there are remarkable *verbatim* parallels between the text of the golden tablet from Hipponion and Parmenides' poem: see Ferrari 2005, 115–117. A detailed analysis of the tablets can be read in Pugliese Carratelli 2001; Bernabé and Jiménez 2008; Graf and Johnston 2013.

31 On the myth of Er, see also the analysis by Oki-Suga in this volume.

In fact, accounts of the journeys of the souls to the afterlife follow a recurrent pattern. This includes, among other details, the description of a crossroads between different paths, which the soul has to choose and follow. In these journeys of the soul the crossroads between different paths represent the possibility for the soul to reach salvation, following the right path, or perdition, following the wrong road. The road, in other words, symbolizes the fate of the soul, which in fact is dramatically determined by which path it will follow. Scholars of Parmenides have extensively shown that the prologue to Parmenides' philosophy is full of reminiscences and echoes of these extraordinary, extramundane journeys of the soul,<sup>32</sup> not without eschatological and initiatory aspects.<sup>33</sup> Sassi compellingly points out that the philosophical crossroads between two opposite and indeed mutually exclusive methods of inquiry is another element in this framework, even though it is not part of the account of Parmenides' journey in the prologue, but is included in his philosophical discourse.

However, in contrast to the eschatological texts, in Parmenides, the crossroads is a journey metaphor indicating the philosophical choice between two methods of research.<sup>34</sup> Yet Parmenides' insistence on journey metaphors as motifs of his philosophical argumentation and the echoes, through these metaphors, both to his own extraordinary journey to knowledge and to the soul's extramundane journeys to salvation or perdition render Parmenides' journey metaphors part of a symbolic (and dramatic) framework. Accordingly, his metaphorical crossroads adopts the symbolic value it has in the accounts of the soul's journeys. Parmenides' journey metaphors serve the purpose of dramatizing one's own choice towards the right way of inquiry.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, Parmenides' use of journey metaphors intentionally draws attention to a conventional and widely used metaphor cluster, that of the journey depicting aspects of knowledge. His metaphors have, at the same time, argumentative and paraenetic purposes. On the one hand, the idea of a crossroads between two paths of inquiry that the philosopher/traveler must follow if he wants to gain knowledge has a strongly philosophical value in Parmenides' poem, as it is very apt to depict Parmenides' philosophical dilemma and the principle of *tertium non datur*: either it is or it is not. Yet, while the goddess urges Parmenides to adopt a specific method of inquiry, to abandon the antipodal method, and to follow a specific theory about the physical world, Parmenides wishes to present and promote his philosophy by persuading his audience to make the right choice: the choice for his philosophy. In fact, Parmenides' figurative language suggests

32 Cf. Morrison 1955; Feyerabend 1984; Pugliese Carratelli 1988; Sassi 1988; Battezzato 2005, 90; Ferrari 2005, 115–117; Palmer 2009, 58–61.

33 Note that εἰδότες φῶτα (B 1.3) and κοῦρος (B 1.24) have been examined as elements indicating a mystery-initiatory context, as Diels 1897, 49, already

highlighted. See moreover Burkert 1969, 5 with n. 11 and at 14 with n. 32. More recently, see Ferrari 2007, 103.

34 Sassi 1988, 390–391.

35 See Ferella 2017.

the idea that, just like an extraordinary traveler (such as the soul), the one who wishes to know about natural philosophy can make a crucial choice of either the right or wrong path. At the core of his philosophical arguing, therefore, Parmenides might have felt the need to emphasize that choosing his philosophy is not just an option among other valuable alternatives. Rather, it coincides with the sole possibility to gain true knowledge against unawareness. Once the ‘travelers’ have made the effort to choose the unusual but right ‘path,’ they will experience an extraordinary ‘journey’ that ‘will lead’ them to the promised ‘destination,’ the root of true wisdom, and rescue them from their original condition as ‘randomly wandering men.’ Parmenides’ use of journey metaphors, in conclusion, conveys the symbolic and dramatic notion that knowledge of the truth, that is Parmenides’ philosophy, is ultimately a matter of life or death.

#### 4 Empedocles

Like Heraclitus and Parmenides, Empedocles draws from the metaphor domain of journey in order to depict himself as a traveler who, by following a certain path of song, composes his philosophical poem. I am referring in particular to the lines B 3.3–5 that run as follows:

καὶ σέ, πολυμήστη λευκώλενε παρθένε Μοῦσα,  
ἄντομαι· ὧν θέμις ἐστὶν ἐφημερίοισιν ἀκούειν,  
πέμπε παρ’ Εὐσεβίης ἐλάουσ’ εὐήνιον ἄρμα.

And you, virgin Muse, white-armed, much wooed,  
I entreat you: send what is right for creatures of a day  
to hear, driving the well-reined chariot from Piety.

Clearly Empedocles picks up a famous journey motif relating the image of poetry to a chariot in which the poet, guided by his Muse, rides while composing his song. The image of the chariot of poetry is a traditional metaphor. Parmenides’ chariot on which he is borne to the house of Night can be seen as another instantiation of the same image and, as such, it is traditionally identified with the chariot of poetry. In this context, the Daughters of the Sun, who lead the way for Parmenides, are compared to the Muses who traditionally lead the chariot of poetry and the poetical composition.<sup>36</sup> Empedocles

36 As Fränkel 1951; D’Alessio 1995; Asper 1997, 21–98; Cerri 1999, esp. 96–98, and Ranzato 2015, 25–28 have shown. In this account note that Parmenides is borne, on his chariot, along a path that is characterized as ὁδὸν ... πολύφημον, “a road ... of many

songs” (B 1.2). This word occurs once in *Od.* 22. 375–376 as an epithet of Phemius, the poet “of many songs” of Odysseus’ house, and in Pindar *Istm.* 8.56a–61 in which it characterizes the Muses’ *thrēnos* on Achilles’ corpse. This is a further element in Par-

might have had precisely this traditional image in mind when he encourages his Muse to drive the chariot (of poetry) from Piety. Through this metaphor he claims for himself the composition of a pious, sacred (εὐσεβής), and divinely inspired song.

Like in Heraclitus and, above all, in Parmenides, in Empedocles we also find the metaphor of people as travelers in the journey of life and, while traveling/living, they may acquire more or less valuable knowledge. In fact, whereas ordinary people just wander along and know nothing, those who wish to know shall leave the common path and change their method of inquiry.

Let us examine Empedocles' fragment B 2:

στεινωποὶ μὲν γὰρ παλάμαι κατὰ γυῖα κέχυνται·  
πολλὰ δὲ δεῖλ' ἔμπαια, τὰ τ' ἀμβλύνουσι μερίμνας·  
παῦρον δὲ ζωῆσι βίου μέρος ἀθρήσαντες  
ὠκύμοροι καπνοῖο δίκην ἀρθέντες ἀπέπταν,  
αὐτὸ μόνον πεισθέντες, ὅτῳ προσέκυρσεν ἕκαστος  
πάντοσ' ἐλαυνόμενοι· τὸ δ' ὅλον <τίς ἄρ' > εὔχεται εὐρεῖν;  
οὕτως οὐτ' ἐπιδερκτὰ τὰδ' ἀνδράσιν οὐτ' ἐπακουστά  
οὔτε νόῳ περιληπτὰ. σὺ δ' οὖν, ἐπεὶ ὦδ' ἐλιάσθης,  
πεύσεαι· οὐ πλεῖον γε βροτεῖη μῆτις ὄρωρεν.<sup>37</sup>

For narrow devices are spread through their limbs,  
and many wretched things strike in and dull their meditations.  
And having seen [only] a small portion of life in their lifetime,  
swift to die, carried up like smoke they fly away  
convinced only of that which each has chanced to experience  
being driven in all directions. Who then boasts that he has found the whole?  
These things are not to be seen or heard by men  
or grasped with mind. But you then, since you have turned aside to this place,  
shall learn: mortal intelligence certainly rises no higher.<sup>38</sup>

menides' proem conveying the traditional image of the chariot of poetry led along the path of divinely inspired songs.

37 The text of the fragment follows the reconstruction by Laks and Most 2016, vol. 5, 386–388.

38 The text of the manuscript tradition is not exempt from some problems. The most intricate is related to the last line. In my text I accept the reading transmitted by the manuscripts οὐ πλεῖον γε, considering the modern emendations unnecessary. Like Calzolari 1984, 76 n. 17, and Bollack 1969, III.2, 10 n. 9, I set a punctuation mark after πεύσεαι. Deichgrae-

ber 1938, 23 n. 37, already adopted this 'conservative' solution, whereas Diels-Kranz followed here the nineteenth-century editors who reconstructed the line as follows: πεύσεαι οὐ πλεον ἢ βροτεῖη μῆτις ὄρωρεν. Their text emphasizes the antithesis between human means and divine knowledge. For instance, Kranz's translation "nicht mehr, als sterbliche Klugheit sich regt und erhebt" highlights the idea of a limited human understanding without any differences between ordinary people and the disciple: Empedocles wanted to communicate to Pausanias no more than any other human be-

Sextus Empiricus, who quotes these lines in *Adv. Math.* 7.122–4, refers them to Empedocles’ disdain for sense organs as means to gain genuine knowledge. Human beings are depicted as equipped with narrow devices,<sup>39</sup> which, in conjunction with many wretched things dulling their meditations and with a small portion of life,<sup>40</sup> restrain human beings from finding τὸ ὅλον, the whole. Hence people merely know what they chance to experience and are, for this reason, driven in all directions by their impressions, πάντοσ’ ἐλαυνόμενοι. The image of people being driven in all direction by their powerless senses closely recalls Parmenides’ description of ordinary humans knowing nothing, βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδέν, and wandering along because of helplessness that directs their mind. Thus, just like Parmenides, Empedocles uses journey metaphors to depict ordinary people’s unawareness in contrast to a few chosen people who know or will know.

Furthermore, the image of people being driven by their sensorial impressions points to a method of inquiry that is not appropriate to ‘the whole’ and genuine truth. For perceptions are narrow means able to grasp only a small portion of reality. In contrast, in a way that is reminiscent of Parmenides, Empedocles’ disciple is said to have exceptionally chosen a different path. In contrast to ordinary people wandering about, we have seen above that Parmenides is borne on a precise pathway, which people do not usually walk upon. This leads to the divine source of knowledge. Similarly, Empedocles’ disciple has to part from the common path if he wants to gain true knowledge: σὺ δ’ οὖν, ἐπεὶ ὧδ’ ἐλίεσθης, πύσεαι. In conclusion, we can see that Empedocles extensively draws from the conceptual domain of journey in order to metaphorically organize and structure his idea of inquiry and knowledge more generally.

ing can know. However, as Calzolari has already pointed out, “l’alterità che il frammento stabilisce tra i mortali impotenti di fronte alla forza delle cose e il soggetto che si è appartato, per così dire, fuori dalla mischia (cfr. v. 8), appare ben più evidente qualora implichi un’antitesi altrettanto marcata tra non-conoscenza e conoscenza alla cui acquisizione sia preliminare (come in Parmenide 1, 9) lo straniamento, appunto, dall’orma del volgo.” Following Calzolari, I maintain that the emphasis on “you” (l. 8) gives prominence to the unique nature of the disciple’s experience in contrast to all other people. At the end of his learning process, Pausanias will be able to know much more than any other ordinary human being.

39 The term *παλάμη*, which originally means “the palm of the hand” and is used as synecdoche to in-

dicate the “open hand” (in opposition to the fist) – hence, “hand” in most general terms – is here used metonymically to indicate sense organs. With regard to sensation, this term conveys the idea that sense organs are able to *grasp* reality, as if sensation were a form of contact. In fact, as we will see in due course, Empedocles argues for perception occurring because of a contact, mediated by effluences, between the organs and the objects of perception.

40 Human beings are depicted as *ὠκύμοροι* at l.4. The epic compound *ὠκύμοροι* always has in Homer the meaning of “destined to prompt death” and “bearer of prompt death”. It denotes extraordinary cases of heroes who hurl themselves upon the enemy. Empedocles in contrast employs it as an epithet for the whole of humanity with a shade of universal pessimism.



#### 4.1 A new metaphorical stratum

In doing so, Empedocles follows a well-established tradition. In fact, in the examples analyzed above, we have seen that Empedocles employs, with minor poetical variations, already established and even entrenched journey metaphors to depict his poetical composition and method of inquiry, hence, more generally, various elements related to the domain of knowledge (the chariot of poetry, the paths of research, ordinary people wandering along, the inquirer as a traveler, knowledge as the destination of the right road of inquiry, etc.). As we have seen, these metaphors have already been activated by Heraclitus and, above all, Parmenides. In the examples that now follow, on the other hand, we will observe much more substantial innovations where Empedocles introduces, within the already established metaphor cluster of journey, a fresh metaphorical stratum. This relates to the cluster under analysis, but contributes, by eliciting creative thinking and structuring new insights, to original developments in theoretical arguing.

Let us look at fragment B 3 and, in particular, ll. 9–14:

ἀλλ' ἄγ' ἄθρει πάσῃ παλάμῃ, πῆι δῆλον ἕκαστον,  
μήτε τιν' ὄψιν ἔχων πίστει πλέον ἢ κατ' ἀκουήν  
ἢ ἀκοήν ἐρίδουπον ὑπὲρ τρανώματα γλώσσης,  
μήτε τι τῶν ἄλλων, ὅπόσῃ πόρος ἐστὶ νοῆσαι,  
γυίων πίστιν ἔρυκε, νόει δ' ἢ δῆλον ἕκαστον.

But now consider with every power how each thing is clear  
without holding any seeing as more reliable than what you hear,  
nor echoing ear above piercings of the tongue  
and do not in any way curb the reliability  
of the other limbs by which there is *a passage for understanding*  
but understand each thing in the way in which it shows itself.

In these lines Empedocles urges Pausanias to consider everything “in the way in which it shows itself”, ἢ δῆλον ἕκαστον, with every sense organ he has at his disposal, πάσῃ παλάμῃ.<sup>41</sup> These verses are Empedocles’ advice to Pausanias to sharpen every sense organ and to make correct use of each of them when inquiring into the physical world. Correct use requires, for instance, that Pausanias should not prefer a particular sensation over the other sense organs. Even though sight was traditionally considered as the sensation that “reveals many distinctions and most enables us to know,”<sup>42</sup> Pausanias shall know

41 See n. 39 above.

42 Cf. Aristotle *Metaph.* 98ca. The same opinion is held

by Heraclitus B 55 and 101a and by the Hippocratic author of *De Arte* 13.1.

each thing in the way in which it shows itself. Each sense organ is in fact a “passage for understanding”, πόρος ἐστὶ νοῆσαι<sup>43</sup> (B 3.12).

My claim is that Empedocles is building his theory of sensation upon the metaphorical meaning of πόρος. The word πόρος, which originally indicated a passage over a river or a narrow part of the sea (a strait), metaphorically depicts a passage through a permeable substance such as the skin.<sup>44</sup> In Empedocles’ theory of sensation, πόροι are passages that connect the sense organs at the periphery of the body to a central organ in the body, which functions as the controlling organ.<sup>45</sup> In the metaphor use of πόρος indicating body channels carrying perceptions along the body, we see that the established cluster of journey/knowledge welcomes a new metaphorical stratum: the notion of *traveling ‘quanta’ of knowledge*. In other words, while the established metaphor cluster typically envisages the perceiving and knowing subject as a traveler, the new metaphorical stratum introduces the notion that (material elements coming from) objects of perception and knowledge can travel.<sup>46</sup> This creative element permits the eliciting of productive reasoning and gives the cue for a new theory of perception and knowledge acquisition that, as we shall now see, rests upon journey metaphors.

That Empedocles builds upon the metaphorical value of the word *poros* in his theory of perception and knowledge acquisition is emphasized by fragment B 133. Here,

43 In Homer, the verb νόησα means “perceive by the mind”, hence “apprehend”: τὸν δὲ ἰδὼν ἐνόησε, *Il.* 11.599; οὐ ἴδον οὐδ’ ἐνόησα, *Od.* 13.318, cf. *Il.* 10.550, 24.337, etc. By extension, it also means “think”, “consider”, and “reflect”: φρεσὶ ν. ἐνθ’ εἶπεν ἢ ἔνθα in *Il.* 15.81; μετὰ φρεσὶ σῆσι νόησον Αἰνείαν, ἢ κέν μιν ἐρύσσειαι ἢ κεν ἑάσῃς in *Il.* 20.311; οὐδ’ ἐνόησε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμὸν ὥς ... *Il.* 15.264; see von Fritz 1943.

44 In Empedocles a further metaphorical meaning for the term πόρος is attested indicating a textual passage in a given work (cf. B 35.1).

45 Empedocles did not give a thorough explanation of what these πόροι are made of and, above all, what they contain inside: see Theophr. *Sens.* 13. Moreover, the metaphorical use of the term *poros* with reference to sense organs may not be an Empedoclean innovation. Alcmaeon of Croton could have employed this term before Empedocles in order to refer to body channels that connect the eyes to the brain. However, as we do not have Alcmaeon’s words on his theory of perception, but only reports of later sources (specifically Theophrastus and Calcidius), we cannot evaluate his use of the term *poros*

or his metaphorical language in his theoretical discourse. Therefore, Empedocles’ verses remain the first Presocratic first-hand source we have to explore this particular topic. Moreover, even though it could be hypothesized that, because of Alcmaeon’s use, πόρος at Empedocles’ time is already on its way to become a technical term in theories of perception and knowledge acquisition, we can be pretty sure that Empedocles still perceives its metaphorical aspect. A strong indication of this is Empedocles’ use of the synonymous word ἀμαξίτρος for πόρος in B 133 (see below) – an unusual word in such a context, which activates the metaphoricity of the whole image. On the estranging effect of rare words in metaphor use and their power to activate metaphoricity in such contexts, see Ferella 2017, 116–117.

46 This idea can be related to the traditional image of words that move and can be moved. In fact they are winged (*Il.* 1.201, 2.7, 4.69 etc.), pass the barrier of the teeth (*Il.* 4.350, 14.83, etc.) and can be put into the listener’s θυμός (*Od.* 1.361, 21.355. Cf. Hes. *Erga* 274).

according to Clemens of Alexandria,<sup>47</sup> Empedocles presents the divine (τὸ θεῖον) as an entity that cannot be known by sensation:

οὐκ ἔστιν πελάσασθαι ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἐφικτόν  
 ἡμετέροις, ἢ χερσὶ λαβεῖν, ἤπερ τε μεγίστη  
 πειθοῦς ἀνθρώποισιν ἀμαξιτὸς εἰς φρένα πίπτει.<sup>48</sup>

It is not possible to approach it with our eyes  
 or to grasp it with our hands, by which the greatest  
 road of persuasion penetrates to the mind of men.

For the present study, the phrase ἤπερ τε μεγίστη/πειθοῦς ἀνθρώποισιν ἀμαξιτὸς εἰς φρένα πίπτει is highly relevant: therein Empedocles expresses the idea that knowledge gained from sense organs such as our eyes or our hands is the most persuasive form of knowledge. What is important to note is that this idea is expressed through a journey metaphor presenting eyes and hands, metonymies indicating the respective sense organs, as the beginning of a road that leads persuasion to the mind. The idea of sensory pores as roads through which sensation and also persuasion can find passage, hence a pathway into the body, suggests the image of traveling objects of perception and knowledge entering the body. In fact, according to Empedocles, some elementary streams of these objects do travel from them through space and may reach the inside of the body, where the controlling and knowing organ lies.<sup>49</sup>

Empedocles' theories of perception and knowledge acquisition are known to us thanks to Theophrastus' systematic treatment of the most important theories concerning perception and knowledge acquisition before Aristotle.<sup>50</sup> According to Theophras-

47 *Strom.* 5.81. 2 (DK 31 B 133). Clemens quotes the lines together with a fragment of Solon (F 16) and one of Antisthenes (F 24), within a treatment on how to obtain πίστις about topics that are beyond the realm of sense organs and escape, therefore, perception.

48 The text of the fragment follows the reconstruction by Laks and Most 2016, vol. 5, 366.

49 Empedocles variously refers to this organ by the term φρήν (or in the plural φρένες), σπλάγχχα and πραπίδες: φρήν: B 134, 4; 23, 9; 114, 3; 133, 4. φρένες: B 5; B 17, 14. πραπίδες: B 110, 1; 129, 2 and 4; 132, 1. σπλάγχχα: B 43. It is debated both which part of the body they describe exactly, and whether they are used as synonyms to depict the same organ. It can be generally maintained that they all refer to "the part of the thorax that is the physical basis of thinking": see Wright 1995, 164.

50 In his *De Sensibus*, Theophrastus classifies the processes and the objects of perceiving, thinking, and knowing with reference to nine early thinkers, specifically, Parmenides (sections 3–4), Empedocles (7–24), Alcmaeon (25–26), Anaxagoras (27–37), Cleidemus (38), Diogenes of Apollonia (39–48), Democritus (49–82), and Plato (5–6 and 83–91). While relatively little space is given to the theories of Parmenides, Alcmaeon, and Cleidemus, Theophrastus draws more attention to Anaxagoras, Diogenes, and Plato and dedicates to each of them approximately ten sections. However, as we can see, Theophrastus' investigation focuses above all on Empedocles and Democritus, and this is a sign of the importance that these theories have in their philosophical system. Theophrastus' preference for Empedocles and Democritus may also be explained by the fact that these two thinkers argue

tus, Empedocles argues that perception occurs through an adaptation, ἐναρμόττειν,<sup>51</sup> of the perceived things to the pores, πόροι, of each sense organ. The adaptation between sense organs and objects of perception is mediated through ἀπορροαί, literally “streams”, which are continuously emanated from compounds.<sup>52</sup> These streams get in touch with sense organs and, if they fit them, they may enter the body. Empedocles does not provide precise information about the nature of the *aporroai*. Do they have the same qualities of the objects that emanate them? It seems fair to assume so;<sup>53</sup> otherwise it is difficult to imagine how the perceptual objects could be recognized.

Another general inference we may make is that effluences emanating from compounds are themselves made of (at least one of) the four elements. Indeed, Empedocles’ ontology seems to require that, like everything else in the physical world, effluences too are elementary substances. Moreover, words, hence sounds, are regarded as ‘things’ in the epic poems:

In Homer words are winged (*Il.* 1.201, 2.7, 4.69 etc.), go past the barrier of the teeth (*Il.* 4.350, 14.83, etc.) and are put by the listener into his or her θυμός—μῦθον πεπνυμένον ἔνθετο θυμῷ (*Od.* 1.361, 21.355); cf. Hes. *Erga* 274 [...] Such a physical representation of words and thoughts, found in Homer, continues through the work of other Presocratics (Heraclitus is an obvious example) to Plato [...], Aristotle [...] and the Stoics’ assumption of φωναί as σώματα.<sup>54</sup>

It follows that, during the contact between material *aporroai* emanating from the perceptual object and *poroi* in the body, there is an exchange of substance and transit of external elements into the body. Sensation, in other words, is a material *transfer of elementary streams* from the object to the subject of perception. In B 133 it is specified that eyes and hands are limbs by which the road of persuasion leads εἰς φρένα. The transit of sensory elements, therefore, ends in the mind, which, according to Empedocles, is collocated in the chest. To sum up, the sense organs function as ‘gates’ in the body that may be entered by streams of sensory elements. Thus, by listening to Empedocles’ doctrine, by observing things in the world, by smelling, tasting, or touching them, hence by getting in touch with every perceptual item of the physical world, people receive, through

for physiological and quite mechanistic theories that aim to explain sensation and knowledge acquisition in a unified and complex system. This may have led Theophrastus to concentrate on them in order to submit them to his most meticulous criticism. See Sassi 1978, 5–6.

51 At chapter 15, Theophrastus reveals that the word ἀρμόττειν is explicitly used by Empedocles to refer to processes of recognition of things.

52 Cf. Plutarch *Quaest. nat.* 916 D (=DK 31 B 89): σκόπει δὴ, κατ’ Ἐμπεδοκλέα “γνοῦς ὅτι πάντων εἰσὶν ἀπορροαί, ὅσας ἐγένοντο...” οὐ γὰρ ζῶων μόνον οὐδὲ φυτῶν οὐδὲ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης, ἀλλὰ καὶ λίθων ἄπεισιν ἐνδελεχῶς πολλὰ ρεύματα καὶ χαλκοῦ καὶ σιδήρου.

53 Cf. Long 1966, 260.

54 Wright 1995, 259.

their own sensory pores, streams of elementary substance. Through body channels, this substance travels inside the body and reaches the mind. Here the substance of sensation is stored up in order to produce thought and knowledge.

Consider now fragment B 110:

εἰ γάρ κέν σφ' ἀδινῆσιν ὑπὸ πραπίδεςσιν ἐρείσας  
 εὐμένεως καθαρῆσιν ἐποπτεύσεις μελέτησιν,  
 ταῦτά τέ σοι μάλα πάντα δι' αἰῶνος παρέσσονται,  
 ἄλλα τε πόλλ' ἀπὸ τῶνδ' ἐκτῆσσαι· αὐτὰ γὰρ αὔξει  
 ταῦτ' εἰς ἥθος ἕκαστον, ὅπῃ φύσις ἐστὶν ἐκάστωι.  
 εἰ δὲ σύ γ' ἄλλοίων ἐπορέξῃαι, οἷα κατ' ἄνδρας  
 μυρία δειλὰ πέλονται ἅ τ' ἀμβλύνουσι μερίμνας,  
 ἧ σ' ἄφαρ ἐκλείψουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο  
 σφῶν αὐτῶν ποθέοντα φίλην ἐπὶ γένναν ἰκέσθαι·  
 πάντα γὰρ ἴσθι φρόνησιν ἔχειν καὶ νόματος αἴσαν.

For if, thrusting them in your crowded praecordia  
 willingly you will gaze on them with pure meditations  
 these things will all be with you throughout your life  
 and many other things will spring from these: these will  
 increase them, each according to its character, where each has its origin.  
 But if you will turn to other things, such as  
 the ten thousand wretched things which are among men and blunt their  
 meditations,  
 quickly they will leave you with the passing of time  
 desiring to get to their own spring:  
 know that everything has thought and a share of understanding.

What are those things, which under certain circumstances will be with Pausanias throughout all his life, making other things spring from them and increase them, while, under other circumstances, they will leave him and get back to their offspring?<sup>55</sup> I would argue for interpreting the neutral plurals as all inputs that Pausanias may gain by sensation,

55 The hypotheses of scholars can be divided into those interpreting the neuter plurals either as the four elements or as Empedocles' teachings or true statements about the world. Diels translated them as "die Lehren des Meisters". According to Schwabl 1956 the reference is to "die Grundkräfte der Natur". Long 1966 suggested that σφε refers to "my teachings", or "true statements about the world (conceived in physical terms)", and αὐτὰ ... ταῦτα to

both external elements, that is, teaching in its physical term and to the elements within a body. Bollack 1969, 577, argues for a reference to the "puissances [...] sans doute le six". Trépanier 2004, 160 identifies them *prima facie* with Empedocles' teachings, but these, "in as much as they are true, can be conceived analogously to, or rather simply identified with, the elements themselves".

ranging from Empedocles' words to every single piece of information the disciple has gained by observing, touching, and testing "each thing as it shows itself". In other words, ταῦτα/αὐτά here are likely to correspond to all pieces of *aporroai* emanated by the surrounding world, including Empedocles' words. Moreover, since they are able to increase themselves if pushed firmly in the organs of thought, ταῦτα/αὐτά might also include all 'secondary' notions and concepts one may obtain by reasoning, hence all elements potentially useful to gain and deepen one's knowledge.

As ll.4–5 refer to some sort of growth (αὐτά γὰρ αὔξει/ταῦτ(α)), a reference that involves the elements seems to be necessary, unless αὔξει is said metaphorically. As I shall show hereafter, however, we can make sense of these verses in the best way by taking αὔξει literally and assuming that Empedocles is talking of a physical growth.

According to Empedocles' physics, growth is an aggregation of elements, while decrease coincides with their separation. Growth and decrease imply, therefore, that the things subjected to them are material compounds (that is, they are made of elements). However, ταῦτα also indicates something to which one must direct all one's concern and attention. Doing so, ταῦτα will be by you through the rest of your life, while many other things will spring from ταῦτα and increase them. This rules out the four elements as referent:<sup>56</sup> according to Empedocles' ontology the elements are the principles of everything and the only things that really are. It makes no sense to state, therefore, that other things will spring out *in addition to the elements* and increase them. It follows, therefore, that although ταῦτα/αὐτά are made of elements, the referent here cannot be shifted to the level of the four eternal principles but must stay at the level of perishable compounds.

As we have seen above, all kinds of *aporroai* are made of physical matter, hence of at least one of the four elements. Moreover, in Empedocles' worldview, thoughts may be seen as *somata* of some sort, as they are produced by processing the elementary substances of the *aporroai* stored up and "cut up" in the chest.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the bodily nature of thoughts may be inferred from B 110.4–5: all inputs coming from the environment can multiply if one reflects on them. Yet they increase not only one another, as argued in the lines above, but they also make the mind grow, as we read in B 17.14: ἀλλ' ἄγε μύθων κλυθι· μάθη γάρ τοι φρένας αὔξει, "But come! Hear my words; for learning will expand

<sup>56</sup> See n. 55 above.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. PStrasb. a(ii) 29: ἐκ τῶν ἀψευδῇ κόμισαι δείγματα μ[ύθων.] Here Empedocles invites Pausanias to "store up in his mind", κομίζω φρενί, Empedocles' words as unerring evidence of the truth, ἀψευδῇ δείγματα μύθων. This indicates that effluences (in this particular case those originating from Empe-

docles' words) can be stored up in one's φρήν. Elsewhere, we read that Empedocles' words can also be "cut up", διατέμνω, in one's σπλάγχχα (γνώθι διατηθέντος ἐνὶ σπλάγχχοισι λόγιοι, B 4.4). Clearly both passages indicate a process of reflection or meditation finalized to produce new thought and knowledge.

your mind". Here, like in B 110.4–5, it is stressed that the process of knowledge acquisition deriving from Pausanias' attention to, hence his reflection upon, Empedocles' words favors growth in the body and, precisely, in the mind.<sup>58</sup> As mentioned above, growth is always related to the aggregation of elements. This indicates that thoughts, concepts, epistemic notions, and, in general, all "mental products" of this sort are compounds of elements and have, as does everything else, a physical basis that is subjected to aggregation and separation.

Thus, as we can see, what happens to the body during sensation and knowledge acquisition is depicted as a mechanical process resting upon an array of journey metaphors: streams of elementary substances *departing from* all physical things *move* through space and may *enter* the *gates* of sense organs, *travel* through body *channels* into the body and *arrive* at the central organ in the thorax. Here *aporroai* are stored up, pushed firmly into the mind, gazed upon and assimilated. Since they are made of physical stuff, once assimilated, they produce a growth in the body (specifically, in the mind). Thought production and subsequent mental growth only occur, however, if Pausanias is well disposed towards the inputs the environment continuously *emanates*. Otherwise, the sensory substances of the *aporroai* will *abandon* him quickly and *return* to their spring, hence to the object that *emanated* them. Once again, we observe that metaphor journeys are employed to depict substances of perception and knowledge travel from the object to the person, and even the other way around, if the one who wishes to know is not well disposed to receive them.

By way of concluding, the purpose behind metaphor use in these Empedoclean fragments is highly argumentative: journey metaphors are employed in philosophical, better still in physiological argumentation in order to theorize processes of perception and knowledge acquisition. What is worth noting here is that Empedocles, by drawing from a traditional metaphor cluster, creates a completely new picture. Whereas journey metaphors are traditionally employed according to a standard pattern that depicts those who aim to know as travelers, their method of inquiry as a path they follow, and knowledge as the destination of this journey, the poetic genius of Empedocles uses instantiations from the same metaphor cluster to create an innovative image – elements of knowledge moving through space, entering the body along body channels, and arriving at the knowing central organ. In conclusion, Empedocles' variation of an established metaphorical pattern and his introduction of a new metaphorical stratum result in a creative, original, and well-formulated mechanical theory of sensation and knowledge acquisition. Empedocles' metaphor use is a clear example, I believe, of how influential

58 Note that the expression ὅπη φύσις ἐστὶν ἐκάστωι in B 110.5 may indicate blood or, more generally,

φρένες as that organ "where each (mental product or epistemic input) has its origin".

(the variations of) a metaphor cluster may be in the production of philosophical reasoning. Furthermore, it unambiguously shows to what extent metaphor use contributes to the formulation of scientific theories, which will have an important legacy for later philosophical speculation.

## 5 Conclusion

Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Empedocles pervasively employ journey metaphors to depict aspects of knowledge, but have very different ways of using them and, accordingly, diverse purposes when drawing from the same metaphor cluster. Heraclitus employs them either to conceptualize the abstract notion of the world soul or to depict and reject a common method of inquiry coinciding with journeys of research and collection of factual data, which are found to be insufficient when seeking into the soul (and its *logos*). In Parmenides, journey metaphors are employed to depict diverse methods of inquiry but display a highly symbolic and paraenetic purpose: by echoing the destiny of the soul in the afterlife, Parmenides uses these metaphors to dramatize the choice for his philosophy, presented as the only path that leads to vivifying truth. Finally, Empedocles uses the same metaphor cluster both in the ‘standard’ way, to depict poetic composition and ways of inquiry, and by significantly innovating on the traditional pattern for genuinely argumentative purposes: journey metaphors depict the physiological processes of sensation and knowledge acquisition.

All this points to the powerful, malleable, and even polyvalent nature of the metaphor cluster of journey/knowledge among different philosophers and even within the same text (above all in the case of Empedocles). The case studies presented here offered some important glimpses into the relation between metaphor, imagination, and argumentation, above all when a fresh metaphorical stratum is introduced within an already established metaphor. In particular, they pretty well show to what extent the introduction of a fresh metaphorical stratum contributes to original developments in philosophical theories.



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**CHIARA FERELLA**

Chiara Ferella studied Classics at the Universities of L'Aquila, Cambridge, Pisa and Munich. She is a research associate at the Johannes-Gutenberg University of Mainz within the Research Training Group 1876 *Early Concepts of Humans and Nature: Universal, Specific, Interchanged*. She is currently a fellow in Early Greek Philosophy of the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies.

Dr Chiara Ferella

Research Training Group

*Early Concepts of Humans and Nature: Universal, Specific, Interchanged*

Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz

Hegelstraße 59

55122 Mainz, Germany

E-Mail: ferella@uni-mainz.de;

cferella@chs.harvard.edu